

EXHIBIT 11

DAILY NEWS

Rikers detainees say brown water bring rashes and stomach sickness; advocates say it's another sign of inhumane NYC jail conditions

Graham Rayman, New York Daily News

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NEW YORK — Brown water spews from faucets and shower heads in at least one Rikers Island housing area, detainees say — a condition they blame for rashes and stomach woes, and which advocates say is another sign of deplorably cruel conditions at the city's jails.

Many in a housing unit containing 50 or so people at Rikers' Anna M. Kross Center began to break out in strange rashes and experience digestive problems, five detainees told the Daily News.

They and their relatives complained to staff and filed at least two dozen 311 complaints. But they say nothing has been done to fix the problems — and the Department of Correction says it has had no reports of any issues with brown water at the Kross Center.

“Sanitary water is a basic human need. No one should be housed in areas without it,” Legal Aid Society spokesman Redmond Haskins said. “These are old, decrepit facilities that must be closed, but until they are, the city has an obligation to find ways to keep people jailed there safe.”

Public attention to city jails has been focused on the 33 deaths in the system since Jan. 1, 2021, including 17 so far in 2022.

But the brown water at the 44-year-old Kross Center is another example of what advocates describe as inhumane

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outdoor rec yards taken over by weeds growing through cracked concrete, and feces-stained floors.



Lamar Dreher, 35, who arrived in the Kross Center on July 22 on a weapons possession charge, said he had a stomach ache for three days from drinking the water.



“The water is brown,” Dreher said. “I don’t know what’s going on with the water, but when you take a shower, you get a rash, and it itches. The skin is irritated. Everyone has the rashes. The officers just say the water is no good.”

Dreher said he was told a work order had been called in but it hasn’t appeared that any actual work took place.

Dreher’s girlfriend, Robyn Nieuweleer, 47, started filing 311 complaints in early August about the water and other problems. She wound up filing nearly two dozen.

The 311 system dutifully sent Nieuweleer emails acknowledging the complaints, but no actual city official contacted her.

“I have never received a response,” she said. “All I do is send. All I get is, ‘It will be directed to the right department.’”

“It’s like World War I when soldiers would get trench foot from drinking the water,” said Dreher’s lawyer, Alex Sanchez.

Dreher also had a severe asthma attack in early August. He says was rebuffed when he asked for a respiratory pump that would help along with medication to address his ailment.

Sanchez sent an email on Dreher’s behalf to the Correction Department on Aug. 11. “This matter demands immediate action. Mr. Dreher’s physical health, and possibly his life, may be in jeopardy,” Sanchez wrote.

Eventually, Dreher was provided the pump, Sanchez said.

“The water is bad and they are afraid to drink it ... Lamar’s gotten dehydrated and sick,” Sanchez said.

Jasiah Bruce 25, said he had been seeing brownish water off and on since he arrived in AMKC eight months ago on an attempted murder charge.

skin has been having a rash since I've been in here. It must be a pipe issue causing contamination in the water."



Detainees complain that the lack of showers makes the odor of un-showered bodies difficult to take. Toilet paper, soap and toothpaste often run out. Correction Department staff have told them to buy small bottles of water from the commissary, detainees say..



"They tell us there's no toilet tissue in the whole jail," Dreher said. "What are you supposed to wipe yourself with? Rikers just isn't working for us."

Another detainee, who asked not to be identified, said DOC provides one larger container of drinking water a day, but that runs out within an hour and isn't replaced.

"I started breaking out on my body with these dry patches that I've never had in my life," he said.

Anthony Herriot, 35, said that on July 4, a dead rat was found in the vegetarian chili. He was told by staff to call 311. At another point, there were cockroaches in the collard greens.

Herriot also described similar issues with the brown water.

"I was throwing up for several days," said Herriot, who was released Oct. 6. "It was messing up my skin. They said it was a pipe issue, and we just have to deal with it."

(Rocco Parascandola contributed to this report.)
